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ADLER

HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL
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The History of The Central Synagogue.

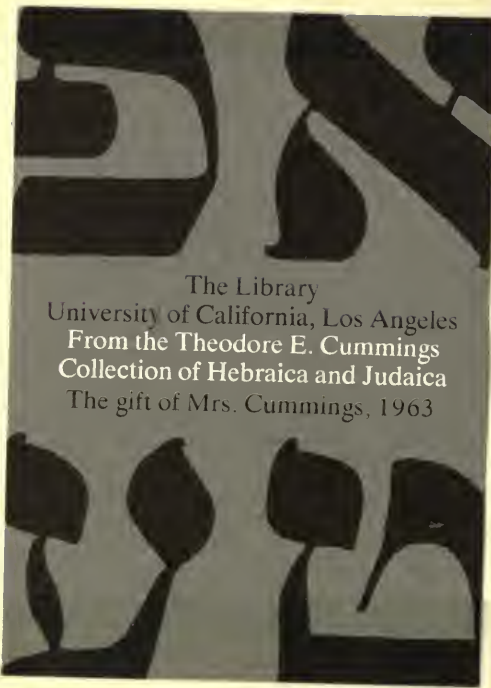
1855—1905.

BY THE

Rev. MICHAEL ADLER, B.A.

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THE HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE, 1855-1905.

BY THE REV. MICHAEL ADLER, B.A.

On the 10th of Nisan of this year, the congregation of the Central Synagogue will have reached the jubilee of its existence. The present building is the second in which the congregation has worshipped. It was consecrated in the year 1870. The first synagogue was opened in the year 1855. The history of these fifty years is the story of the migration of Jewish families from the East to the West of London, and the provision of houses of worship to satisfy the new requirements.

In the year 1848, the authorities of the Great Synagogue realised that the removal of many of their most influential supporters to the western districts would become a source of danger, unless a synagogue were established in the locality. This necessity was made the more urgent by the consideration that in Burton Street, Euston Road, the Reformers had built their first synagogue, in the year 1842, and were attracting to their ranks many of the residents of the neighbourhood. In the year 1848 also, Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid laid the foundation-stone of a new Reform Synagogue at Margaret Street, Great Portland Street. In the programme issued by the authors of the reform movement, the early reformers, most of whom lived west of Holborn Circus, ascribe the neglect of attendance at synagogue "to the distance of the existing synagogues from the place of our residence, to the inconvenient hours at which they are opened, to the unimpressive manner in which service is performed, and to the absence of religious instruction in our synagogue." In order to counteract the activity on the part of the "seceders," and, at the same time, to meet some of the objections raised by them, the Great Synagogue set itself to establish a branch in the West End. At a meeting of the Committee of the Great Synagogue, held on November 7th, 1848, the following resolution was adopted:—

That it being considered of the utmost importance that a place of worship in connection with this Synagogue be established at the West End of the Metropolis, this Committee do take the subject into consideration at the next meeting

The Committee which passed this resolution consisted of:—Mr. Lewis Jacobs, President; Sir Anthony de Rothschild and Mr. Dennis M. Samuel, Vice-Presidents; Mr. Joshua Alexander, Overseer; Mr. Samuel Moses,

Treasurer; Messrs. S. L. de Symons, Simon Samuel, Morris Emanuel, Mark Woolf, and S. B. Worms.

As will be seen later, the question of the modification of the ritual was also raised in connection with the proposed new synagogue. From the first, the Committee of the Great Synagogue were determined that any new synagogue established in the West should be erected under their own auspices.

There existed at this time a treaty between the three City Synagogues, the Great, New, and Hambro', on the one side, and the Western Synagogue, St. Albans Place, on the other. This agreement, which was made in the year 1803, stipulated, *inter alia*, that the City congregations should undertake to prevent any other West End congregation from being established within six miles of Denmark Court, Strand, where the Western Synagogue was then situated.* In a very short time, the Western Synagogue broke the treaty, so that it was no matter of surprise that the City Synagogues felt themselves absolved from the conditions of this agreement. In addition to this, the Western Synagogue had completely estranged itself from its brethren in the City by its bold refusal, in the year 1841, to read in the Synagogue the declaration of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. S. Herschell, and the Haham Meldola, denouncing as schismatic the newly formed Congregation of British Jews.

A Sub-Committee was accordingly appointed in January, 1849 by the Committee of the Great Synagogue "to report their views as to the eligibility of the establishment of a place of worship in the West End of the metropolis in connection with this congregation." The Sub-Committee reported favourably on the proposal, having taken some ten months to consider the matter, and the report was, in accordance with the law, ordered to be submitted to the Vestry.† This latter body met three days later, on October 18th, and confirmed the resolution of the Committee. On January 13th, 1850, a special meeting of the Vestry was summoned, in view of the importance of the new departure, and was attended by twenty-nine members, an unusually large number. It was resolved unanimously:—

That it is highly necessary that a branch Synagogue in connection with this Congregation should, without delay, be established in the West End of the Metropolis in order to afford the numerous members of this Synagogue and their families, residing in that locality, the means to attend a place of Divine worship.

The Committee, on February 24th, 1850, as in duty bound, considered the recommendation of the Vestry, and decided that the proposed new synagogue should be a quarter of a mile west of Regent Circus (quite near to the Reform Synagogue in Margaret Street). The Honorary Officers, together with Mr. Simon Samuel and Mr. S. L. de Symons, were requested to look out for an eligible site for the synagogue, and the sum of £6,000

*See *Jewish Chronicle*, October 22, 1897.

†The Great Synagogue, until the formation of the Union in 1870, was governed by a Committee of the six honorary officers and seven Elders, and a larger body called the Vestry.

was voted for the erection of the building. Three weeks later, the Committee decided to invite the co-operation of the New and Hambro' Synagogues in the work, and, as they had resolved that seats should also be let in the proposed new synagogue to members of the Portuguese community, they asked the Sephardi Congregation in Bevis Marks to aid the movement. As representatives of this latter body, Sir Moses Montefiore, Mr. Joseph I. Brandon, and Mr. Joseph Montefiore were nominated delegates.

In response to these invitations, a special meeting was held, at which each of the four congregations was fully represented. In addition to those members of the Committee of the Great Synagogue mentioned above, there were also present Baron Lionel de Rothschild and Mr. Louis Cohen, on behalf of the Great Synagogue; Sir Moses Montefiore, Mr. Joseph Montefiore, and Mr. Nathaniel Lindo, on behalf of the Portuguese Synagogue; Mr. Louis Lucas and Mr. Alderman Salomons represented the New Synagogue, and Mr. Aaron Solomon the Hambro' Synagogue. The delegates decided that their respective congregations should be asked to consider the matter forthwith, with a view of falling in with the suggestions of the Great Synagogue. The first to signify their assent were the Committee of the New Synagogue, who, whilst reminding the Great Synagogue of the treaty between the three City Synagogues, which had hitherto worked so harmoniously, offered their support in the new movement on condition that the synagogue should be a branch of all the City synagogues, and not of the Great Synagogue alone. As might have been expected, the Elders of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue did not see their way to co-operate in the work. They pointed out that:

They were animated by an equal desire with that of the Wardens and the Committee of the Great Synagogue to promote so important an object as affording to the numerous residents of the West End of the Metropolis in connection with the City Synagogues the opportunity of attending a place of worship in their locality, but that there were insuperable difficulties in regard to the differences of ritual, and the usages, customs, and practices of the Synagogues, which the members of both communions must be equally anxious respectively to preserve. Under the circumstances, the Elders are reluctantly compelled to decline the invitation given them, and, in doing so, deem it due to the Wardens and Committee of the Great Synagogue unreservedly to state (and to assure them) that if, in the interests and future welfare of their ancient synagogue, they should feel themselves called upon to take steps similar to those contemplated by the Great Synagogue, those steps will be taken, not in a spirit of rivalry, but in that of a friendly and cordial union with them and the other City synagogues, and with the view to contribute their aid in supplying the spiritual wants of the Jewish community in the two existing Minhagim.

The latter part of this communication from the Sephardi community referred to the intention of their leaders to build a West End synagogue also, which was carried into effect by the opening of a small synagogue in Wigmore Street, three years later. The Hambro' Synagogue approved the suggestion of the Great Synagogue. The Chairman of the meeting of delegates, Mr. Lewis Jacobs, stated that "the Great Synagogue was perfectly agreeable to the suggestion that the proposed synagogue in the West should be a branch of the united congregations, and, with this object in

view, the Great Synagogue proposed that one quarter of the expense should be contributed by the New and Hambro' Synagogues respectively, and one half by the Great Synagogue." This definite suggestion as to the cost does not appear to have been welcomed by the New and Hambro' Synagogues. The Hambro' Synagogue held a general meeting of its seatholders on the subject, and whilst pointing out that the establishment of a West End synagogue, in connection with one of the City synagogues only, would be a proceeding of much danger to the existence of the other City synagogues, not only from a pecuniary, but also from a religious, point of view, made no offer to pay the suggested quota of the expense. Ultimately, it became perfectly clear that if a branch synagogue was to be established at all, the Great Synagogue would have to bear the burden of it alone.

A new topic of interest in connection with this matter now arose. Many of those members of the Great Synagogue, who had already left the City, were probably acquainted with the improvements effected in synagogue worship by the Reform community, and were desirous of introducing some change in the ritual of the new orthodox synagogue. The Chief Rabbi, the Rev. Dr. N. M. Adler, was, therefore, approached, and asked to set forth in detail the ritual of the contemplated branch synagogue in the West "with a view to the alteration of the present mode as regards the times and length of worship." It is interesting to note here that this was the first of the two important movements connected with the Central Synagogue (the second being that of 1879), which had as their object the removal of some of the objectionable portions of the orthodox synagogue service.

The Chief Rabbi gave careful consideration to the request of the Great Synagogue, and, in his reply, dated November 3rd, 1850, he gravely warned his congregation against introducing reforms which would be sure to be imitated by other congregations. His experience of thirty years in Germany,

Where the greatest variety of innovations had been introduced in the mode of worship proved that the organic changing of the ritual throws a fire-brand into the Congregation, which not only weakens the bond of union, but rends asunder the most sacred ties of relationship, and plunges the rabbis or ministers from the moment they leave the rabbinical precept into the greatest inconsistencies, and forces them to proceed from reform to reform until it leads them to the undermining of those pillars on which the whole edifice rests, and moreover it is far from advantageous to Judaism at large, as the places of worship, after the first charm of novelty had subsided, were deserted.

The Chief Rabbi admits, however, that there were certain special reasons for adopting slight reforms in the new branch synagogue. The service should be carried on with becoming solemnity and the introduction of a choir should be permitted, at least at the Musaf service, to lead the singing. He proposed that the number of *"ברך ט"* should be curtailed, and that all financial matters not belonging to the service should, as much as possible, be removed. He conceded the division of the service, the first Sabbath morning service to commence at 8 o'clock, and to last not longer than 1½ hours, the second to commence at 11 o'clock, and to last not longer than

two hours. After giving various details of the service on other important days, including the omission of most of the Piyutim, and promising a response in a future communication as to which of those repetitions and those objectionable passages which are not read in other congregations may be omitted, he expresses the hope "that the various views on this important matter will be reconciled by his propositions, and that whatever contradictory feeling may be existing, all will give way to the paramount necessity of maintaining concord and union amongst our community."

The reply of the Chief Rabbi does not appear to have given complete satisfaction, and it was not until February, 1851, that any further steps were taken in the matter. It is a striking coincidence that, whilst the thorny subject of the ritual was being discussed, and the Committee of the Great Synagogue attacked as being a party to the reform agitation, there appeared in London a man who was destined to play an important rôle in the future of the contemplated branch synagogue. The Rev. Aaron Levy Green, who had already distinguished himself in Bristol, was elected Second Reader of the Great Synagogue in February, 1851.

No action was taken on the reply from Dr. Adler, and the movement seemed to be at a standstill for some time. However, on February 9th, one of the Wardens, Mr. Dennis M. Samuel, gave notice of motion that he would propose, at the next meeting of the Committee, that no further delay be permitted in view of the imperative necessity of establishing a branch synagogue, and that the ritual required for the service for the new synagogue should be "based upon the true principles of our faith, congenial to the rising generation." To this end, the surpluses of the Synagogue accounts of each year should be set apart to meet the expense of building a synagogue, "which was to be conducted upon a revised orthodox foundation." For some reason or other, the motion of Mr. Samuel was not proceeded with at any subsequent meeting, and in the following month the Vestry asked the Chief Rabbi to confer with the Committee of the Synagogue "with a view to the removal of those difficulties which have hitherto prevented the establishment of a branch synagogue." Accordingly, on June 17th, the Chief Rabbi attended a meeting of the Committee at which there were present, amongst others: Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, Messrs. Joshua Alexander, S. L. de Symons, Louis Cohen, and S. B. Worms. Dr. Adler agreed to reconsider his suggestions for a revised ritual. In his second letter on the subject, the Chief Rabbi modified some of his former proposals slightly, and urged upon the Committee to hasten the erection of the new synagogue. In comparing the two sets of proposals laid before the Committee by the Chief Rabbi, one is struck by the comparatively small difference between them. The main features of the service upon which the Great Synagogue appear to have laid stress, and which were only conceded in the Chief Rabbi's second letter, are the addition of יגל the 84th Psalm, and אנינים ומירות to the second Sabbath Morning Service, which was to commence at 10.30 or 11. Although Dr. Adler's letter was written on July 8th, 1851, the Committee did not discuss it until the 2nd December of the same year, when the delay of twelve months, brought about

by the question of the ritual, was concluded by the acceptance of the Chief Rabbi's revised proposals. The sum of £6,000 was forthwith voted from the funds of the congregation towards the establishment of the new synagogue.

An attempt was now made from another quarter to defeat the plans of the Great Synagogue. The Committee of the Western Synagogue, St. Albans Place, asked to be heard in opposition to the scheme. In a letter addressed to the Wardens (24 Dec., 1851), they stated that they had learnt, with much concern, of the contemplated new synagogue. They pointed out that not only would such a step seriously injure them, but that there was "no want of spiritual accommodation at this end of the metropolis, there being upwards of 120 vacant seats in this synagogue, and ample space for a still larger number, if required." The Great Synagogue replied rather curtly that they regretted that no purpose would be served by a discussion with the Western Synagogue upon the subject as they were determined to complete their plans as soon as possible. About the same time, the Maiden Lane Synagogue, probably in fear of extinction through the establishment of the Branch Synagogue, sought to effect an amalgamation. The authorities of the Great Synagogue, whose hostility to the Western Synagogue on account of their action during the reform movement has already been referred to, received the overtures of the Maiden Lane Synagogue in a more friendly spirit, but could come to no satisfactory arrangement. Regulations for the new institution were at once drawn up. It was necessary, in thus opening a synagogue in a new district, that care should be exercised that the Great Synagogue should neither infringe its treaties with the New and Hambro' Synagogues nor inflict any injury upon itself. It was, therefore, decided that members of the New and Hambro' Synagogues should be allowed to take seats under certain conditions. An appeal for funds was issued to the community, and steps were taken to find a suitable site for the building. Considerable difficulty was experienced in selecting a position and several months again were wasted. The Great Synagogue authorities were resolved to adhere to their plan of locating their branch in the immediate neighbourhood of the Reform Synagogue in Margaret Street, and not far from the proposed Portuguese Synagogue in Wigmore Street. In the month of August, 1852, the Vestry gently reproached the Committee of the Synagogue for not having as yet obtained a site for the building, and urged them to persevere in their exertions and to complete the arrangements for the new building with all speed. As the Penitential days were drawing near, it was suggested that a temporary building should be opened in which the members of the Great Synagogue residing in the West should be enabled to worship.

A discovery was then made that there was a warehouse at 120, Great Portland Street that might answer the purpose of a temporary synagogue, and on July 14th, 1853, these premises were visited by fifteen members of the Vestry, headed by Mr. Lewis Jacobs, Mr. Louis Nathan, Mr. S. L. de Symons, Mr. Z. A. Jessel (father of Sir George Jessel), Dr. Barnard Van Oven, and Mr. Aron Joseph, most of whom resided in the West End. It was agreed to recommend that the premises be taken on a lease, subject to the possibility of raising the roof of the warehouse. It was further sug-

gested that this building would be suitable for a permanent synagogue, and it was, therefore, decided that a lease for forty-two years should be taken of the premises, determinable at the end of each seven years. The representatives of the Great Synagogue whose names appear in the lease are: Mr. Lewis Jacobs, Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Mr. Joshua Alexander (father of Mr. D. L. Alexander, K.C.), and Mr. Louis Nathan. A sum of £350 was voted for the purchase of the lease. A small committee was appointed to make the necessary arrangements for adapting the building to its sacred purpose, and buying the fittings. The plans and furniture were ordered to be submitted to the Chief Rabbi for his sanction. The prices for seats in the new synagogue were fixed at four guineas, six guineas, and eight guineas each, and for ladies, one guinea and two guineas each. It was arranged that only one *מי שברך*, besides the offerings to the four communal charities, should be made by any seatholder called to the Law.

It was now necessary to elect the officials of the new synagogue, to consist of a Chazan, a Second Reader or *שני*, and a Beadle. Not the slightest hesitation was displayed in choosing a gentleman to fill the first of these three posts. The Rev. A. L. Green had been in office at the Great Synagogue since the early part of 1851, and had become very popular. His work as Hon. Secretary in connection with the movement to found Jews' College had brought him into contact with the heads of the community, who had learned to appreciate his zeal and conspicuous ability. His devotion to his duties had marked him out as the most suitable person to take spiritual charge of the new synagogue. His reputation as a student and a scholar was already established. As a striking instance of the far-sighted wisdom of the authorities, the following incident may be here related. In November, 1853, Mr. Green made a formal application to the Committee of the Synagogue "to be excused from the performance of certain of his duties for the purpose of study," and the Committee readily granted his application. Without going through the form of inviting candidates for the post, Mr. Green was unanimously appointed First Reader of the Branch Synagogue, being at that time (1853) thirty-two years of age. The post of Second Reader was filled by the election, after a keen contest, of the Rev. Samuel Lyons, at that time a teacher in the Jews' Free School, whilst an entry on the Minutes in the month of August, 1854, mentions that Mr. Philip Vallentine was admitted as a candidate for the office of Beadle. Two other applicants for the same post failed to win the favour of the Committee. Mr. Vallentine was accordingly elected unopposed, and is now in the unique and happy position of having faithfully served his congregation throughout the whole period of the fifty years' existence of the Central Synagogue.‡ Authority was also given for the appointment of a small choir consisting of a leader and not less than six youths. The total expense was not to exceed £100 per annum. At the same time, Mrs. Vallentine was

‡As will be easily understood, the reminiscences of the veteran Beadle of the Synagogue have been of incalculable value in the compilation of this history, and I herewith tender my most cordial thanks to Mr. Vallentine for the assistance he has rendered me in the work.

appointed to assist her husband in his duties, and for thirty-five years took her part in the work of the synagogue, winning the respect and esteem of all who knew her.

The hope of the Committee that the building would be ready for the New Year Festival was destined to disappointment. Mr. Samuel Moses, one of the Wardens, reported, on August 31st, 1854, that he had visited the Synagogue recently, and it was found that the walls were not sufficiently dry to open it with safety to the health of the congregation on the ensuing New Year. Further delay also ensued owing to the failure of the contractor. At length, after a delay of six and a half years from the date (November, 1848) when the subject was first mooted, the Committee were able to appoint March 29th, 1855, for the consecration of their Branch Synagogue. Mr. Neumegen, of Gloucester House, Kew, wrote a Hebrew ode in honour of the occasion, which was published in the *Jewish Chronicle*, but was not sung at the consecration service. In this ode, occur the following stanzas:

ענף הקדושה הזאת סלסלה כעץ בנן רוח' תפרה לער כי מנוז נאמנה חטבה

"O exalt this holy branch like a tree in a well-watered garden; may it flourish for ever, for from a faithful stock it is sprung."

A plea for the Reformers that they might return to the fold was also made by the poet.

נם העוזבים ארחות ישנים בחסדך נהלם' כי לא להכעסך הפצס רק תועי לבב הם:

"O lead in thy lovingkindness also those who have forsaken the old paths, for their desire is not to anger Thee, but they do err in their heart."

At the opening service, the Rev. Simon Ascher, the celebrated Chazan of the Great Synagogue, officiated, assisted by the Rev. A. L. Green, and among the lads to strew flowers before the procession of the Scrolls, as was then the custom, was David L. Alexander, the present President of the Board of Deputies. Before the service began, the following proclamation was read out from the reading-desk:—

Notice is hereby given that this building now about to be consecrated is a Branch of the Great Synagogue, situate in Duke's Place, in the parish of St. James', Aldgate, in the City of London.

The Chief Rabbi delivered a sermon to a large congregation, in which he referred to the necessity of the extension of the sphere of the Great Synagogue, and impressed upon his hearers the obligation of keeping the Branch in close touch with the parent Synagogue. As the little sanctuary mentioned by the prophet Ezekial was to be the image of Zion's Temple, so should the Branch (well styled נִיָּה 'פה) in every respect resemble the parent establishment. Dr. Adler compared the parent synagogue to an ancient oak, which had weathered many a storm, overtopping all neighbouring trees, and said it would ill become the branch to follow another direction. True, there would be some slight alteration in the branch inasmuch as the morning services on Sabbaths and Festivals were to be separate, as rendered necessary by the vastness of the metropolis, and the

distance which many members lived from the sanctuary. This alteration he had sanctioned with reluctance, being filled with apprehension that this would lead to the neglect of the שְׁמִירָה (the first portion of the service). He warned his congregants against the introduction of reforms, which he compared to the flame of a candle. With a little trimming, the candle burnt brightly; when too closely trimmed, it went out altogether. The Choir, which had been trained by Mr. J. L. Mombach, the Choirmaster of the Great Synagogue, concluded the service by singing an ode composed by the Rev. Dr. Herschell, and Psalm cl. Whilst Mr. Mombach played the serafina (a kind of harmonium), the Choir was conducted by Mr. Isaac Samuel (now the Rev. Isaac Samuel, of the Bayswater Synagogue).

The curtain in front of the Ark was the gift of Mrs. Barnett Joseph. It was said that it had taken nine months to make by the firm of Mr. Victor Abrahams. Among the other earliest presents given to the new Synagogue were a silver cup from Mr. Charles Moseley, a mantle from Mrs. S. I. Joseph, two silk mantles from Baroness Lionel de Rothschild, and a curtain from the same lady on the occasion of the marriage of her daughter Leonora to Baron Alphonse de Rothschild. The Press of the day state that the building was very handsome and tasteful. "There is an airiness and gracefulness in the proportions which is most pleasing."

The Architect, Mr. J. Clarke, described his handiwork as follows:—**

The interior of the Synagogue is about 40 ft. square, with a lofty dome in the centre 20 feet in diameter, richly ornamented with emblematic designs in bold relief, supported by four Corinthian columns. The remaining portion of the ceiling is groined. The light is introduced by means of a lantern of stained glass in the dome, and also by windows over the ends of the gallery, which latter runs round three sides of the building. Under the dome is the reading platform. The principal feature of the building is the Ark, the effect of which is very striking and novel. It is elevated on a platform of veined marble, and approached by three steps of the same material. On each side of the Ark are Corinthian columns which support a canopy. The recess in which the Ark stands has a domical ceiling, elaborately painted and gilt, with the light radiating from above through painted glass. On each side of the Ark are marble pedestals sustaining costly and gigantic candlesticks. The doors of the Ark are of rich damson wood, with gold mountings. The Synagogue contains 212 seats in the body, and 144 in the gallery.

The Synagogue thus commenced its career under the shadow of the Great Synagogue. No weddings were conducted within its walls. It was not allowed to have separate Honorary Officers or Committee, and the Honorary Officers of the Great Synagogue occupied the posts of honour whenever they visited the building in Great Portland Street. At this time, the Honorary Officers of the Great Synagogue were Mr. Z. A. Jessel, Mr. Samuel Moses, Mr. Joshua Alexander, and Mr. Ephraim Alex, the founder and first President of the Board of Guardians. As, therefore, it was uncertain when the Synagogue would have one of the Honorary Officers

**It may be here mentioned that this building, of which a photograph taken recently is reproduced above, is still in existence—being No. 43, Great Portland Street—and forms the concert hall of the German Athenæum, the resort of the cultured German professional classes in London.



Interior of the building which, fifty years ago, was Portland Street Branch Synagogue.

in attendance, a sub-committee was appointed to look after the conduct of the services at the Branch Synagogue. This naturally consisted of those members of the Great Synagogue who, at that time, lived in the West, namely, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, Messrs. S. L. de Symons, Lewis Jacobs, Benjamin Cohen (father of Mr. Arthur Cohen, K.C.), who was for many years a representative of the Central Synagogue at the Council), and Aron Joseph. The elections for the Committee and Vestry were held on the same day at St. James's Place and at Great Portland Street, it being the duty of Mr. Philip Vallentine to carry the ballot boxes to the City for the counting.

The existence of the Synagogue in the West now served as a magnet to draw families from the City, and so it soon came about that the ruling



Interior of the Central Synagogue at the present day.

authorities of the Great Synagogue were, for the greater part, selected from those who attended the services of the Branch Synagogue. The Great Synagogue, therefore, began to suffer, because it was governed by gentlemen who did not worship in Duke's Place. From the year 1855 to the year 1870, when the United Synagogue was founded, almost all the Wardens of the Great Synagogue resided in the West. They were as follows:—Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Professor Jacob Waley, M.A. (father of Mrs. N. L. Cohen), Messrs. S. L. De Symons, Louis Nathan, David M. Davidson, E. Alex, S. A. Jonas, Lionel Louis Cohen (elected Overseer in 1862 and Warden in 1864), and H. L. Beddington.

As will be seen, this government of the City Synagogue by those who lived in the West gradually led to the formation of the United Synagogue, in which work of union the Central Synagogue played a prominent part.

Within six months of its consecration, the new Synagogue had let 81 seats to gentlemen and 60 ladies' seats.' In addition 51 gentlemen and 61 ladies had transferred their seats from the Great Synagogue to the Branch. It was estimated that the total possible income of the Synagogue would amount to about £1,416, and it was arranged that the sum of £200 from the surplus revenue of each year should be allowed to accumulate in order to pay off the debt to the Great Synagogue. The divided service, the second commencing at 10.30, was found to meet the convenience of the congregation, although the Rev. A. L. Green was always opposed to this arrangement, and succeeded in abolishing it when the present synagogue was opened in 1870. Efforts were made by the New Synagogue, Great St. Helen's, in 1855, to obtain the sanction of the Chief Rabbi to a divided service, but in vain.

Numerous members of the New and Hambro' Synagogues now desired to attach themselves to the successful synagogue, and the Great Synagogue arranged with these synagogues to let seats to their members at the rate of five guineas, eight guineas, and ten guineas per annum, and to ladies at 26s. and £2 12s. per annum. It was essential that any person desiring to occupy a seat at the Branch Synagogue should be also a member of the New and Hambro' Synagogues, and any offerings they might wish to make should be paid over to their respective synagogues. It was not until the year 1866 that the privilege of standing יָסַד was extended to the members of the New and Hambro' Synagogues.

There can be but little question that the establishment of the Branch Synagogue in the West kept a large number of wealthy families from drifting from the community. The influence of the Rev. A. L. Green, his amiable personality, his powerful and witty preaching, the decorous rendering of the service, drew a crowded attendance every Sabbath. Mr. Green, in addition to being an excellent Chazan, delivered a sermon every week, and, as a rule, preached extempore. A story is told that, on a certain Sabbath, he had promised one of his congregants to preach upon a special subject. An eminent Christian had arranged to be present in order to hear this sermon, but, at the last moment, was prevented from coming. During the early part of the service, intimation of this fact was conveyed to Mr. Green, and he at once extemporised a sermon, and delivered the prepared one upon another Sabbath. He was especially successful with his appeals for charitable funds. On a certain occasion, an explosion of gun-cotton at the Canal at Regent's Park, that had occurred early on a Friday morning, was attended by loss of life and property, and the next morning Mr. Green made a most moving appeal to his congregation, which resulted in a collection of £2,000 being raised for the sufferers. Mr. Green took a keen personal interest in the establishment of the Jewish Board of Guardians in 1859, in which work Mr. E. Alex and Mr. Lionel L. Cohen (the first Hon. Secretary of the Board) played such important parts. It can truly be said that the Central Synagogue owed its prominence in the community as much to the remarkable personality of its minister as to the social status of its worshippers. No man of his generation was more intimately connected with all the

interests of English Judaism than Mr. Green. Education, religious culture, the state of the poor, the revival of Hebrew literature, the closer union of Jews with each other, whether at home or abroad, the uplifting of the religious tone of the community—all these and a thousand other subjects engaged his attention, and found in him an enthusiastic and energetic worker. He gathered around him all the principal communal leaders, so that there was scarcely an institution, charitable or educational, whose honorary officers did not belong to the Branch Synagogue. Reference should also be made to the personal relations existing between the minister and his congregants. These were of the most cordial nature. Of especial interest were the receptions held in the private Succah at No. 4, Charlotte Street, when Mr. and Mrs. Green entertained the members of the congregation. Among those who regularly attended the services in those days are the following, whose names are taken from the ledgers of 1855-60:—

E. Alex, Joshua Alexander, David Benjamin, Dr. H. Behrend, Ignace Cahn (still a member of the Synagogue), Louis Cohen, S. L. de Symons, Samuel H. Ellis, David Hyam (another of the present members), Ellis A. Franklin, Saul Isaac, Henry Jessel, George Jessel, Aron Joseph, Isaac A. Joseph, H. L. Keeling, Sampson Lucas, Louis C. Lumley, Assur H. Moses (afterwards the first Treasurer of the United Synagogue and a present member of the Central Synagogue), Samuel Montagu, S. Oppenheim (the Secretary of the Great Synagogue), Alderman Benjamin S. Phillips, Barons Nathaniel, Meyer and Lionel de Rothschild, Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Baron de Samuel, Alderman David Salomons, Sampson Samuel, Charles Samuel, Dr. B. Van Oven, Baron S. B. Worms, Jacob Waley, and Joshua Wagg.

By the year 1872, the Synagogue included among its members five M.P.'s, six Barons, two Aldermen of the City of London, the Solicitor-General (Sir George Jessel), and one R.A. (Professor S. A. Hart).

The form of service at the Branch Synagogue seemed to exercise the minds of a Special Committee appointed to revise the Laws of the Congregation in the year 1855, over which Dr. Barnard Van Oven presided. It was pointed out that the modifications sanctioned by the Chief Rabbi at Great Portland Street raised serious doubts as to what was properly comprehended under the definition *מנהג פולין*. The Committee also state that they would have liked to have made it a law that a minister should preach a sermon at stated intervals, but that the privileges of the Chief Rabbi and the laws regulating his office rendered this impossible, "yet the Committee cannot help expressing the strong conviction that pulpit instruction should be in future regular and continuous." The majority of the members of this Revision Committee were attendants at the Great Portland Street Synagogue, where the new practice of delivering weekly sermons had become extremely popular.

In 1860, a movement was set on foot by Mr. Lawrence Levy, Mr. David Benjamin, Mr. Lionel Lucas, and others, all seatholders of the Branch Synagogue, to establish a synagogue in Bayswater, which should be a branch of the Great and the New Synagogues combined. This synagogue was opened in the year 1863, and took away a considerable number of members from the Branch Synagogue who

lived in the Bayswater district. In one of his letters of a later date, "Nemo," (the *nom-de-plume* under which Mr. Green wrote the famous series of letters to the *Jewish Chronicle* on events of the day), alluded to the fact that the Bayswater Synagogue had taken "a whole congregation away from the Branch Synagogue, but that the vacant seats were filled within a couple of weeks." It is interesting to note in this connection that the authorities of the Bayswater Synagogue introduced a new principle into communal politics to the effect that it was not necessary to have a seat in the parent synagogue in order to become a member of a Branch Synagogue.

In the year 1861, Mr. Green addressed a long letter to the Great Synagogue proposing an alteration in the system of offerings. He anticipated in all its details the system which is at present in vogue at the New West End Synagogue, and which recently Mr. Joseph Trenner, when Warden, sought in vain to introduce at the Central Synagogue. Nothing, however, came of these proposals.

In 1862, Mr. Mombach, who taught the choirs both at the Great and the Branch Synagogues, found the work too much for him, and Mr. Green was requested to take charge of the choir. This he did for four months, at the end of which he asked to be excused from performing these duties.

After the synagogue had been in existence seven years, the question of the renewal of the lease arose, and it was decided to take into consideration the desirability of erecting a new building. A sub-committee was appointed consisting of Messrs. Joshua Alexander, S. L. de Symons, L. Lazarus, and the Honorary Officers (Prof. Jacob Waley, L. L. Cohen, E. Alex, and H. L. Beddington). On November 29th, 1866, this sub-committee reported in favour of a block of leasehold houses being taken in Great Portland Street (where now the Synagogue stands) for a period of eighty years, and upon which area a building could be erected fully equal in size to the Great Synagogue. This ambitious scheme was stimulated by the extraordinary success of the Branch Synagogue that even in the first few years of its existence threatened to overshadow the parent Synagogue entirely. In the year 1866, the income of the Great Synagogue amounted to the sum of £2,920, and its surplus was £1,024, whilst the income of the Branch Synagogue had reached a total of £2,809, and its surplus £1,176. All the seats in Great Portland Street were let and applications for more than fifty seats had been refused during the past twelve months.

Early in 1868, Sir Anthony de Rothschild who, at all times, showed a keen interest in the Synagogue, presided over a public meeting held at the Westminster Jews' Free School, in Greek Street, Soho. The meeting approved of the project of building a new synagogue, which was to continue to be a Branch of the Great Synagogue. It also passed a resolution that all members of the synagogue be placed upon a footing of equality. (This referred to the status of the *כְּעָלֵי בַתִּים*, privileged members, that had been much discussed, involving, as it did a distinction in synagogue membership which was finally abolished in May, 1880.) The public meeting, moreover, expressed its

satisfaction "with the endeavours now being made by the Executive for the general fusion of the London Synagogues."

The Great Synagogue voted the sum of £6,000, and Mr. Nathan S. Joseph was selected to be the Architect. In addition to the Honorary Officers mentioned above, a Building and Finance Committee was appointed of which Mr. Edward H. Beddington acted as Treasurer, and among those who took part in the work were Alderman Sir B. S. Phillips, Samuel Montagu, Alfred H. Beddington, and Baron Henry Worms (later Lord Pirbright).

The style of the building adopted was the Moresque, and the original idea of placing the choir above the Ark, behind an ornamented grille, was rejected in favour of seats behind the reading-desk. At first it was proposed to place the principal frontage in Charlotte Street, but, happily, this idea was not accepted. Before any appeal was made to the general public, the sum of nearly £12,000 was promised by the members of the synagogue.

In the work of collecting donations, Mr. Green worked enthusiastically. He greatly desired that the Central should be the "Cathedral" Synagogue of the Metropolis. When the Building Fund Account was closed, it was found that the total cost, inclusive of the purchase of the Leasehold and of the erection of two Ministers' houses and offices, amounted to £37,284, of which £6,000 was the vote of the Great Synagogue, £22,284 was subscribed by the public, £7,800 was raised on Debentures, and £600 was derived from the sale of life seats. The debentures were redeemed at the rate of £1,000 per year, and so prosperous were the early years of the new building that at the end of 1878, the whole sum had been paid off, and the synagogue voluntarily began to repay the contribution of the Great Synagogue—although this grant had been in the nature of a gift.

The interest attaching to the erection of the new building centred round the fact that the scheme for the formation of the United Synagogue was now well advanced. The Chief Rabbi had initiated this movement at a breakfast given by him to the Honorary Officers of the Great Synagogue on the First Day of Tabernacles, 1866. Three of the most regular attendants at the synagogue in Great Portland Street were the prime movers in uniting the London congregations, namely, Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel Louis Cohen, and Professor Jacob Waley. The new synagogue was, therefore, regarded as the symbol of the union of the London community.

On Thursday, 18th March, 1869 (6th Nisan) the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone was performed by Baron Lionel de Rothschild, M.P. The foundation-stone bore the following inscription:—

האבן הראשה הזאת תהיה לעד כי היא פנת בית תפלה יפה נוף ברחוב פארטלאנד
בלונדון הבירה ישרא שחוברו לה יחדיו בני ק"ק בה'כ"ג הגדולה בצירוף בני שאר קהלות
פה אשר ירה השר ה'חר לוי בן השר ה'חר נתן ראטהשילר במעמד פרנסי העדה
ומנהיגיה ובראשם הרב אב'ד מו"ה נתן אדלר הכהן גר'.

ביום ה' ו' ניסן שנת תרכ"ט לפ"ק.

This corner stone of the Central Branch Synagogue was laid on Thursday, the 6th day of Nisan, March 18th, in the year of the world 5629, in the 32nd year of Her

Majesty Queen Victoria, by Baron Lionel de Rothschild; Rev. Nathan Marcus Adler, Chief Rabbi; Rev. Aaron Levy Green, Minister; Sir Anthony Rothschild, Bart, Lionel Louis Cohen, Jacob Waley, M. A., Hyam Leopold Beddington, Wardens; Moses Symons, Overseer; Nathan Solomon Joseph, Architect; John Perry and Co., Builders.

The Rev. A. L. Green read out the following memorial in Hebrew and English, which was placed in a glass bottle and fixed in a cavity of the stone:—

This building is erected as a Branch of the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, and is intended to supersede a smaller neighbouring edifice, whose dimensions were too limited for the number of worshippers therein. When the stone enclosing this memorial was laid, measures were in progress for the fusion of the principal London Congregations under one management, and under the name of the United Synagogue, and it is the earnest hope of those who are assembled around this stone that when this building shall be opened for prayer it will no longer be the branch of any one congregation, but be a constituent, and not the least important part of the United Synagogue.

The speech of Baron Lionel de Rothschild on this occasion aroused considerable interest by his giving utterance to the following sentiments:—

He was proud to see that so many members of the community were in the enjoyment of a great position on account of their talents and intellectual attainments, and he was also gratified at the high municipal and Parliamentary offices to which others had been elected. But these advantages would, indeed, be dearly bought if they were not accompanied by increased attention to their Institutions and an increased observance of their holy religion.

Exactly one year later, from the day of the laying of the foundation-stone, on the 6th Nisan, April 7th, 1870, which was also the date of the anniversary of the consecration of the Great Synagogue, the new building was consecrated by the Chief Rabbi. The Sabbath previous to the consecration, the last Sabbath morning service was held at the old building. There was a very large attendance, and Mr. Green delivered an eloquent farewell sermon. He referred to the progress that had been made in the community since 1855, and especially to the fact that the political disabilities had been removed since the opening of that synagogue, and he trusted that they would be as happy in their more beautiful synagogue as they had been in their small House of God. He mentioned that in future the division of the Sabbath morning services would terminate.

On the day of the Consecration, the Chief Rabbi and a number of the principal members went to the old building and read the Afternoon Service. The Chief Rabbi, who, on this day, had *Jahrzeit*, recited the last Kaddish and the two Sephorim that had remained to the end were removed from the Ark, and carried to the new building. The Consecration Service attracted an enormous attendance, the whole of the arrangements being in the hands of Mr. Lionel Van Oven and Mr. N. S. Joseph. In the space in front of the Wardens' box, stood a canopy held by four young men. They were Messrs. Joseph Lindo Alexander, Nathaniel Louis Cohen, Louis Davidson, and George Solomon

Joseph. The Ark was opened by Sir Moses Montefiore, then eighty-five years of age. The Rev. S. Ascher, of the Great Synagogue, took part in the service, and a Hebrew ode, which is now always sung at the consecration of a synagogue, was for the first time heard at this service. It was the composition of the Chief Rabbi himself. The English paraphrase in verse which was distributed was the work of Michael Henry, then editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*. A picture of the ceremony appeared in the *Graphic*. Mr. Jacob Waley entertained at dinner the principal actors in the consecration service.

On the 14th July, of the same year, the Act bringing into existence the United Synagogue received the Royal assent, and became part of the law of the land. The Central Synagogue became the fifth constituent of the United Synagogue and its intimate connection with the parent body, the Great Synagogue, came to an end. In December of the same year, the first election took place under the new law for officers of the synagogue.

The Honorary Officers of the Great Synagogue, Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel Louis Cohen, Jacob Waley, Hyam Leopold Beddington, Joseph Lazarus, and Moses Symons published a notice in the Press to the effect that, having held office for so many years at the Great Synagogue, they were resolved not to accept re-election, but would willingly join the Committee of either the Great or the Central Synagogue. This action on the part of the men who had been instrumental in bringing the United Synagogue into existence aroused considerable feeling, and a widely-signed requisition was promoted by the Central Synagogue, asking them to alter their decision. The members of the Central Synagogue went further, in spite of their self-denying ordinance, and elected Professor Jacob Waley and Mr. Lionel Louis Cohen head of the poll for the posts of Wardens. These two gentlemen, however, remained firm in their resolve not to accept office, and the next two names on the list were declared elected as the first Wardens of the Central Synagogue: Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild and Mr. Barnett Meyers. There were thirty candidates for the five seats on the Board of Management, those elected being:—Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Messrs. Lionel Louis Cohen, Jacob Waley, S. L. Miers, and H. L. Beddington. Sir Anthony de Rothschild, having been elected first President of the United Synagogue, retired from the Board of Management, and Mr. Moses Symons was elected in his place. There was an equal keenness to represent the synagogue on the General Council, there being thirty-eight candidates for the seven seats. The Central Synagogue gave to the new Council its President and one of its two Vice-Presidents, Mr. Lionel Louis Cohen. Among other members of the Central Synagogue who have done yeoman service for the Council of the United Synagogue may be mentioned Mr. Noah Davis, Mr. N. L. Cohen, Mr. N. S. Joseph, Mr. Assur H. Moses, Mr. Solomon Schloss, Mr. Felix A. Davis, Mr. Lionel L. Alexander, Mr. David Davis, and Dr. A. Ascher. The synagogue soon became very prosperous. At the end of its first complete year of existence (1871), 365 seats were let on the ground floor and 269 in the gallery, and the total income was £4,904, the balance being £916, in addition to which the sum of £312 was paid as interest on

debentures, and the sum of £1,000 paid off for ten debentures. The Auditors of the first balance-sheet of the new building were Messrs. Ellis A. Franklin and Alfred H. Beddington.

The fixtures of the old synagogue at 43, Great Portland Street, were given to the Brighton and Stepney Synagogues and the building transformed into a concert-room. Very shortly after the opening of the present synagogue, an offer of the gift of a pulpit was made, but declined by the Board of Management. A lectern that ran on wheels was dragged out from the side of the Ark, and placed at the top of the steps whenever a sermon was delivered. In the year 1880, a carved wooden pulpit was installed until the present handsome marble pulpit was presented in 1901 by Mr. Asher Isaacs, the Financial Representative.

On the Intermediate Sabbath in Passover, 1871, there was a formal interchange of pulpits between the ministers of the Bayswater and the Central Synagogues—the Rev. A. L. Green delivering a sermon at the former, and the Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler at the latter. At the time, the incident (the first of its kind) occasioned much interest. The first three Honorary Officers were Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, Mr. Barnett Meyers, and Mr. S. L. Miers, who, in the year 1872, presented the Chupah which is still in use. The first wedding solemnised was that of Mr. Asher Wertheimer, followed very shortly afterwards by the marriages of Mr. Charles Davis and Mr. Louis Davidson.

An interesting visit was paid to the synagogue on 3rd July, 1872, by Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil, when a prayer-book and an illuminated scroll, upon which was written a prayer offered up for his Imperial Majesty, were presented to him by the Board of Management.

In February, 1873, a proposal was made to utilise the tower of the synagogue for the purposes of a Hebrew library, but nothing resulted from this project. By the year 1875, every seat in the building was let, and forty new seats were added. In the following year the building was completely redecorated, at a cost of £1,300, which sum was raised by the congregation. The Roman pavement was placed in front of the Ark, and Mr. Frederick Davis, at that time Warden of the Synagogue, beautified the Ark by presenting twenty-five Italian marble columns.

The question of the position of the pulpit and the choir was from time to time a subject of much discussion. At one time it was proposed to introduce an organ into the synagogue, but the suggestion met with such strenuous opposition that the project was abandoned, as was also a proposal to have ladies on the choir.

The subject of improvements in the form of service engaged the attention of the Board of Management in May, 1879, when a Sub-Committee, consisting of Messrs. Frederick Davis, Alfred H. Beddington, Jonah Jonas, J. A. Joseph, and Henry J. Kisch, was appointed to consider the matter. It was well known that the Rev. A. L. Green was strongly in favour of a modified service, including the reading of the Law in cycles of

three years, and it was due, no doubt, to his initiative that the movement was set on foot. The co-operation of the other London synagogues was invited in drawing up a series of proposals to be laid before the Chief Rabbi. With the exception of the Hambro' Synagogue, the eight constituent synagogues, including the recently opened East London and New West End Synagogues, accepted invitations to a Conference which held its first meeting at the offices of the Central Synagogue on October 23rd, 1879. Mr. Lionel L. Cohen was appointed Chairman and Mr. Henry J. Kisch Honorary Secretary, with the Rev. S. Lyons to assist him. Numerous meetings were held, and in May, 1880, the Chief Rabbi published his reply to the requests of the Conference in which many of the alterations of the ritual that had been solicited were officially sanctioned.

A Sabbath Religion Class for children was instituted in the same year by Mr. Green on the lines of the classes held in the city under the auspices of the Jewish Association for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge, in which body Mr. Green always took a deep interest. Under Mr. Fay, these classes were held on Sundays, and are continued to the present day. The month of January, 1881, was noteworthy for the visit to the synagogue of His Majesty the King, then the Prince of Wales, to attend the marriage of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, the register of the marriage showing the signature of "Albert Edward P." The second occasion on which His Majesty visited the synagogue was in December, 1898, at the service in memory of the late Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild.

On Sunday, the 11th of March, 1883, a severe blow befell the synagogue in the death of its beloved minister, the Rev. A. L. Green, which took place under painfully sudden circumstances. On the morning of that day Mr. Green had officiated at the setting of the tombstone to the memory of his old friend, Mr. Ephraim Alex. In the afternoon, he attended a public meeting at the Jewish Working Men's Club, Great Alie Street, in aid of the Building Fund of the Jews' Free School, where he made a most effective speech, full of characteristic witticisms. As he was proceeding down Cornhill on his way home from the meeting, he was seized with an apoplectic fit, and died. The whole community united to mourn the loss of so prominent a figure in English Jewry, but nowhere was his death felt so sincerely as at the synagogue where he had officiated for a period of twenty-eight years. He had been so closely identified with the fortunes of the Central Synagogue—almost all the congregation had grown up with him—that the idea of the synagogue without his guidance seemed almost unthinkable.

The vacancy was not filled until some considerable time later. It was felt to be impossible to find any minister in the community capable of combining the remarkable many-sidedness of Mr. Green. It was, therefore, resolved that a good Reader, in the first instance, should be engaged. A proposal was also put forward that an arrangement should be made with the Bayswater and New West End Synagogues whereby the ministers of those synagogues, the Revs. Dr. Hermann Adler and S. Singer, should each deliver a sermon once a month at the Central Synagogue. This plan was defeated

at a general meeting of the members held in October, when it was decided that a minister should be appointed especially attached to the Central Synagogue. After having read the services for six months, the Rev. E. Spero, at that time one of the Readers of the Hambro' Synagogue, was elected unopposed to the post of Reader (February, 1884), and the Rev. David Fay was selected, among seven candidates, to fill the post of Preacher (in July, 1884). This election possessed features of especial interest inasmuch as each candidate had to undergo the ordeal of preaching thrice, and at the suggestion of Mr. D. L. Alexander, K.C., and his brother, the late Mr. Lionel L. Alexander, the contest was not decided by the ordinary ballot, but by a system of exhaustive voting, whereby the electors were asked to signify the order in which they preferred the various candidates. Mr. Fay had been Minister to the Bristol Congregation, and, besides his synagogue work, performed a considerable amount of communal work as Honorary Secretary of the Committee of Visitors among the Jewish Poor, and also of the Jewish Religious Education Board. He became also Secretary of the Central Synagogue on the death of the Rev. S. Lyons in 1887.

From the year 1884 to 1887 there were three ministers at the synagogue, when the death of the Rev. S. Lyons brought to a close a faithful service of thirty-two years' duration as Second Reader and Secretary.

The death of Mr. Lionel L. Cohen (at this time a member of the House of Commons) in the same year deprived the United Synagogue of a Vice-President and of a leader with a genius for work and organisation who could not be replaced. The congregation in Great Portland Street also lost an earnest worshipper, a sincere friend, a wise counsellor. Mr. Cohen had remained a member of the Board of Management of the Central Synagogue from the day of the foundation of the United Synagogue, and the memorial windows, which were set up in the Synagogue at the suggestion of Mr. Joseph Pyke, the then Warden, and which were unveiled in 1897 by his son, Mr. Leonard L. Cohen, are a testimony of the profound respect in which his memory will always be held.

In the year 1889, the first of the series of Special Services for Girls was held. These services were organised by Mr. Fay, with the assistance of Mr. Leonard L. Cohen, one of the Wardens, and have been continued by the present minister. After eighteen years' splendid work on behalf of the Synagogue and the community, Mr. Fay was compelled by ill-health to resign his position. An illuminated address was presented to him on his retirement, in which was inscribed the resolution adopted at a general meeting held on November 9th, 1902. This ran as follows:—

That this general meeting of seatholders of the Central Synagogue has learnt, with deep regret, that owing to continued ill-health, the Rev. David Fay has found it imperative to resign the office of Minister of the Congregation. The meeting desires to place upon record its high appreciation of his zealous service and devoted labours over a period of eighteen years, and tenders him its warmest sympathy in his enforced retirement, with the expression of its earnest hope that the cessation of his congregational, and communal work will, by Divine Grace, be the means of sparing him to his family and friends for many years in renewed health and strength.

In June, 1903, the Rev. Michael Adler, B.A., of the Hammersmith Synagogue, was appointed in his place, and Mr. Lyon J. Salomons, who had been Acting-Secretary for six years, was elected to the post of Secretary. The election of Mr. Adler was carried out by an Advisory Committee, a novel form of procedure that was successfully introduced by Mr. Joseph Trenner, one of the Wardens.

The following is the complete list of those who have held the principal offices in the synagogue since the year 1870:—

WARDENS.—Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, 1870-1871; Barnett Meyers, 1870-1877; L. C. Lumley, 1872-1874; Edwin L. Samuel, 1874-1875; Frederick Davis (father of the present Warden, Mr. Edward P. Davis, and of Mr. Felix A. Davis, Treasurer of the United Synagogue), 1875-1881; Alfred H. Beddington, 1877-1879; Baron Henry de Worms, M.P., 1879-1881. (At the end of one year of office Baron de Worms consented to his re-election as Warden upon the condition that Mr. Frederick Davis should remain as his colleague. The pressure of his Parliamentary duties was the cause of his resignation in 1881); Jonah Jonas (father of the present Warden, Mr. M. J. Jonas), 1881-1889; M. S. Oppenheim, 1881-1883; Samuel E. Moss, 1883-1904 (Mr. Moss thus served the post of Warden for 21 years, and had only been on the Board of Management for one year when he was raised to the post of Honorary Officer. His frequent re-election was a striking testimony on the part of the congregation to the esteem and affection in which he was held. His sudden death, three months after his resignation of office, evoked an expression of deep sympathy. His portrait now hangs in the Council Chamber); Leonard L. Cohen, 1889-1893; Joseph Pyke, 1893-1901; Joseph Trenner, 1901-1903; and the present Wardens, Messrs. E. P. Davis, elected 1903, and M. J. Jonas, in 1904.

FINANCIAL REPRESENTATIVES.—S. L. Miers, 1870-1873; Frederick Davis, 1873-1875; Alfred H. Beddington, 1875-1877; Jonah Jonas, 1877-1881; J. Benjamin, 1881-1883; Henry Isaacs, 1883-1885; Henry Simmons, 1885-1893. In the latter year, Mr. Asher Isaacs, the present holder of the office, was appointed Financial Representative, having already been a member of the Board of Management since the year 1875.

Of the members of the present Board of Management, Mr. Leopold de Rothschild was elected in 1883, and Mr. S. J. Phillips in 1882. Dr. M. Friedländer, the respected Principal of Jews' College, joined the Board in 1890.

Among the recent additions to the adornments of the Synagogue should be mentioned the tablets at the side of the Ark containing the Prayer for the Royal Family, which were presented by an esteemed member of the congregation, who desires to remain anonymous; and also the installation of the electric light, which was carried out by Mr. B. Blaiberg in 1896. In March of the present year a bronze and marble tablet to the memory of the 116 Jewish soldiers who died in the South African War was affixed to the exterior of the building in Great Portland Street. The ceremony of

unveiling this memorial tablet was performed by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, K.G., this being the occasion of his second visit to the synagogue. Earl Roberts had also been present at one of the Chanuca Military Service held here in December, 1902, which service was further noteworthy for the presence, in the Wardens' box, of one of the members of the Central Synagogue, Sir Marcus Samuel, Bart., as Lord Mayor of London.

Reference should also be made to the most recent developments in the activities of the Synagogue in the institution of monthly children's services, the formation of a Ladies' Needlework Guild, the Literary and Debating Society, and the Working Men's Club in Tottenham Court Road, which was brought into existence by the efforts of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, Mr. Felix A. Davis, and the Rev. Michael Adler.

In concluding this survey of the fifty years' history of the Central Synagogue, I desire to tender my cordial thanks to the Hon. Officers of the Central and the Great Synagogues for the facilities they have afforded me in collecting the material for the subject. I also have to thank many members of the synagogue, in addition to Mr. P. Vallentine, for the valuable information they have furnished me with. In the fervent hope that the Central Synagogue may flourish for all time, I echo the prayer inscribed over the entrance to the synagogue, והתפללו והתחננו אליך בבית הזה "And may they continue to pray and offer their supplication unto Thee in this House."



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